



Inside CFSA



News for partners of the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency

Brenda Donald Walker, Interim Director

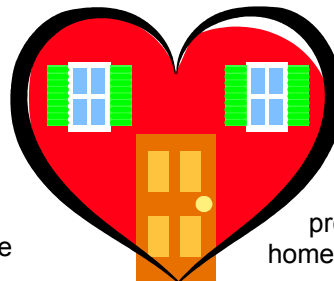
Foster Parent Appreciation Month

Foster Parents Open Homes and Hearts to District Kids

Teresa, 45, is a native Washingtonian, Ward 7 resident, and pre-kindergarten teacher at a charter school. Since 2000, she has also been a licensed foster parent for CFSA.

Divorced and with no birth children, Teresa feels God has made her a mother through fostering and adoption. She has opened her home and heart to eight foster children to date and is also the adoptive mother of a girl, now 10. Teresa's work experience makes her a natural at nurturing infants and young children. She loves to travel and takes her children along to expose them to new experiences.

Teresa is a tireless advocate for all her foster children and sometimes remains involved in their lives even after they achieve permanence. This was the case with five-year-old Yolanda* who went from being Teresa's foster child to a forever home with her grandmother two years ago. Grandmother quickly recognized the strong bond between granddaughter and former foster mom and made Teresa Yolanda's godmother.



teens, especially those entering care for the first time or in group homes when they really need a family setting."

As a result, CFSA is targeting somewhat younger adults and families, especially in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. **We are urgently seeking people willing to foster:**

- **Boys of all ages.**
- **Teen moms and their babies.**
- **Brothers and sisters who need to stay together.**
- **Children and teens on short notice, including nights, weekends, and holidays.**
- **Children with substantial medical needs.**

Local experience reflects that of child welfare agencies nationally, with only about 11 percent of foster parent prospects actually becoming licensed and loss of 50 foster homes annually. So CFSA must recruit 1,000 families into our licensing process to achieve a net gain of 50 licensed homes.

Ambitious Goal, Clear Targets

Teresa is typical of CFSA's current group of 437 District-based, agency-licensed foster parents, according to a strategic recruitment plan prepared by CFSA's Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment Unit.

- Approximately 75 percent are single, divorced, or widowed.
- Some 65 percent are ages 40 to 59.
- A total of 60 percent reside in Wards 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8.
- Their main reasons for fostering are to make a positive difference for children and to give back to the community.

This year, CFSA is seeking to recruit and license 50 new foster homes in the District. "Our goal is for more children who undergo the disruption of removal from their birth homes to stay in the familiar environment of their own school and neighborhood," says Maureen McFadden, CFSA foster and adoptive parent recruitment supervisor. "We also need to diversify our foster parent base to better match the varied needs of our children and

New Strategies

CFSA recruiters recently participated in a regional foster/adoptive parent recruitment project of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments with funding from the Freddie Mac Foundation. "By looking at characteristics of our current foster parents, COG's consultant was able to tell us where to find more prospects," McFadden says. "We got a host of new ideas." Among them are recruiting at youth activities, such as sports events, and in art-and-culture venues.

To aid foster parent retention, COG is also using specially appropriated congressional funds to develop a respite program. It will ensure foster children and teens get safe, nurturing care while foster parents take a break.

District residents over age 21 who want to open their homes and hearts by becoming licensed foster parents for CFSA should call **(202) 671-LOVE. ■**

CFSA Public Information faxes this newsletter monthly to agency providers and other partners. To provide comments or to update your fax number, call (202) 442-6015. Editor: Mindy Good •

* Name changed to protect confidentiality